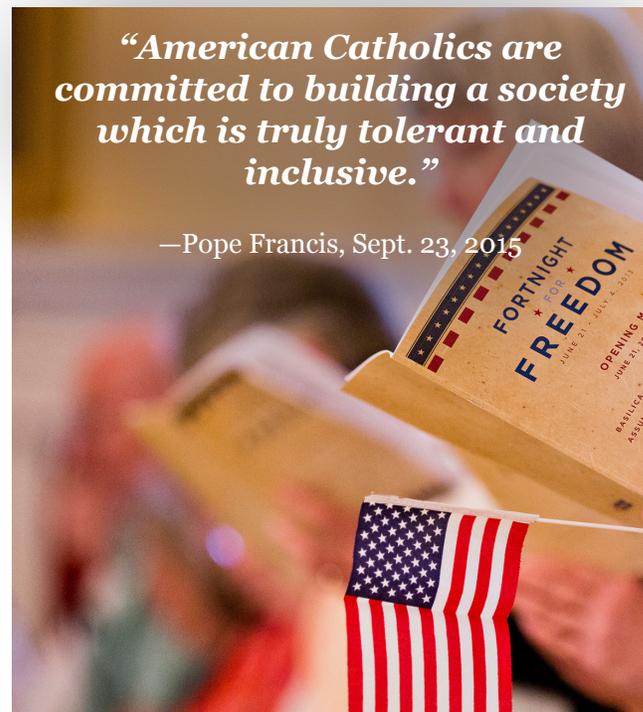




# Nativity of St. John the Baptist

*Solemnity—June 24*

In the Gospels, John, a kinsman of Jesus through their mothers, preached repentance and baptized with water to prepare for the Messiah's coming. This feast marks his exceptional birth to the aged priest, Zechariah, and the equally aged and barren Elizabeth. The angel Gabriel announces his birth in a vision to Zechariah, who hesitates in believing and is struck mute until eight days after John's birth. Then, Zechariah, in a beautiful canticle that ends the first chapter of Luke's Gospel, proclaims that John "will be called prophet of the Most High" (Lk 1:76). John's eventual beheading is commemorated with an Aug. 29 feast. A patron saint of Canada and Jordan, John is also the patron of Florence and the Knights Hospitaller of St. John.



*“American Catholics are committed to building a society which is truly tolerant and inclusive.”*

—Pope Francis, Sept. 23, 2015

## **Religious Freedom Week - June 22 – 29, 2018**

*Prayer Intention and Reflection for June 24, 2018*

### **Pray**

May the Holy Spirit give us the courage to bear witness to the truth of the gospel, even in the face of social and legal pressure.

### **Reflect**

All baptized Christians are called to share the joy of the gospel with others. When most of our co-workers, neighbors, and even family members don't share our faith and perhaps do not practice any faith at all, we might be timid or afraid to talk about our faith. But in a culture filled with so much junk, people are hungry for solid food. When we encounter Jesus Christ, we come to know the bread of life, the truth in which the restless hearts of our age

can rest. We love our neighbors by helping them to encounter Jesus.

### **Act**

As the Pope Francis teaches, "The Holy Spirit also grants the courage to proclaim the newness of the Gospel with boldness (parrhesía) in every time and place, even when it meets with opposition" (Evangelii gaudium, 259). Let's take this week to exercise our freedom by sharing our faith in Jesus Christ or to talk about religious freedom with others. Try it today!

Visit <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/religious-liberty/religious-freedom-week/index.cfm> for more daily reflections and prayer intentions for Religious Freedom Week.



The Religious Freedom Week prayer intention and reflection was originally published on USCCB.org.

Copyright © 2013, 2018, Catholic News Service—United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington DC. All rights reserved.

Images: CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz, Long Island Catholic; CNS photo/Tom McCarthy Jr., Catholic Review